Chinese Ambassador to PNG Yang Xiaoguang Gives a Written Interview to PNG Mainstream Media The National on China-PNG Relations

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On 27th March, H.E. Yang Xiaoguang, Chinese Ambassador to PNG gave a written interview to PNG mainstrain media The National, introducing China-PNG relations and bilateral cooperation in the fields of development, trade and investment, people-to-people exchanges, security and disaster prevention and mitigation, etc. The National published the full text of the interview as follows:

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PNG and China maintain ties

MORE than five decades since the establishment of their diplomatic ties, Papua New Guinea-China relations have maintained steady and sound growth. The political trust between the two countries has continued to deepen, so as economic, trade, and investments. Business Reporter NATHAN WOTI sat down with Chinese ambassador YANG XIAOGUANG to discuss the bilateral relations.

Chinese ambassador Yang Xiaoguang

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Q: What is most significant about the PNG-China relationship?

YANG: Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to PNG in 2018, and PNG Prime Minister Marape paid an official visit to China in 2023. This year will mark the 50th anniversary of Papua New Guinea's independence. In 2026, China will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of its diplomatic relations with PNG. China and PNG are good friends, good partners and good brothers. Our two countries have set a fine example of solidarity, collaboration and win-win cooperation between developing countries.

Q: What is the one thing that stands out from the PNG-China relationship in the past 49 years?

YANG: China appreciates PNG's firm commitment to the one-China principle, that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China. And Taiwan is an absolute part of China's territory. PNG has been supporting all efforts made by the Chinese government to realize reunification. China fully respects PNG's sovereignty and independence, and supports PNG's own choice of development pursuant to its national conditions.

In recent years, under the strategic guidance of the leaders of both countries, bilateral cooperation has achieved fruitful results, greatly benefiting the people of PNG. In China we say "It is better to teach a man to fish than to give him a fish" . It is a traditional Chinese philosophical idea,

China's development cooperation with PNG is not only about "blood transfusion" to solve the local needs of the moment, but also about cultivating the "blood-creation" capacity. Most of China's aid projects focus on connectivity and people's livelihoods, which have helped build a solid foundation for local economic and social development. Chinese enterprises in PNG have paid great attention to localized operations, employing and training a lot of local staff to help them get the hang of the skills.

Q: How has China supported PNG in the 49 years? And how much in monetary value has China spent on PNG through aid, grants, concessional loans, and development support funding?

YANG: In terms of development, PNG is the first Pacific island country to sign a bilateral document on the Belt and Road cooperation with China. It is also the largest recipient of China's aid in the Pacific. China has provided billions of US dollars of grants and concessional loans to PNG, delivering more than 60 projects in areas including infrastructure, education, health, agriculture, public services and so on, which have brought tangible benefits to PNG's economic and social development and people's wellbeing. For example, the Independence Boulevard, Spring Highway, International Convention Centre, Sir John Guise Stadium and Butuka Academy in Port Moresby, and the teaching buildings, dormitories and library of the Western Pacific University in Southern Highlands are all grant projects of the Chinese Government. China has also provided concessional loans to support PNG to build the national power grid, national telecommunication base stations, Kumul submarine cable network, digital television transformation project and a large number of other infrastructure projects. The experts of China aid Juncao grass and Upland Rice project have been rooted in Eastern Highlands for more than 20 years to assist local people to grow mushroom and raise livestock with Juncao grass, and cultivate upland rice, contributing to economic and social development of the local society and poverty alleviation and income generation of the local people.

Q: What is the total value of trade and investment between PNG and China and what opportunities are there for PNG in the Chinese market?

YANG: In trade and investment, China and PNG enjoy healthy and stable relations and complementary industrial structures, and have great potential for economic and trade cooperation. PNG is China's largest trading partner and largest investment destination among the Pacific Island countries. With more than 400 million middle-income population, China's huge consumption market has opened the door for PNG's natural gas, minerals and agriculture, forestry and fishery products. China's main exports to PNG include mechanical and electrical products, textiles and garments, and steel. The main categories of imports from PNG to China include LNG, timber and wood products, nickel and nickel products, and agricultural and fishery products. The total trade volume between China and PNG last year exceeded K17.8 billion, with a surplus of over K7.5 billion on the PNG side. In recent years, more Chinese enterprises have come to PNG for trade and investment cooperation in areas including infrastructure construction, energy, minerals, power, telecommunications, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, wholesale and retail, with key investments concentrated in the areas of minerals, retail, infrastructure and forestry. Major investment projects by Chinese enterprises in PNG include the Ramu Nico, the Porgera Mining, and the Edevu Hydropower.

Q: What other areas does China support PNG in?

YANG: In 2023, the China Southern Airlines began the direct flight from Guangzhou to Port Moresby, marking the first commercial direct flight between China's mainland and the Pacific island countries. Last year, it increased from one flight to three per week. China has been running the annual Chinese government scholarships programme for PNG students for 39 consecutive years. Last year, more than 20 Chinese government scholarship recipients and 54 PNG "Stem scholarship" recipients went to China for study. The Chinese medical team has been providing medical service in the Port Moresby General Hospital for 23 years. More than 140 Chinese medical experts have come to PNG and made important contributions to improving medical and health services. We will build on existing fruitful cooperation, and further deepen exchanges and mutual understanding between our two sides, including promoting exchanges of art groups, libraries, museums and other institutions, and expanding cooperation in tourism. We encourage more visa facilitation measures, and hope that the PNG side could agree with the visa-on-arrival arrangement for Chinese ordinary passport-holders at an early date to further facilitate people-to-people exchanges.

Q: Security and natural disasters are important concerns for Pacific Islands, including PNG. How has China invested in these areas?

YANG: In terms of security and disaster prevention and mitigation, China has provided various disaster relief assistance and policing and defence support to PNG. In 2024, China provided the PNG Government US$1.2 million (about K4.9 million) cash assistance and substantial disaster relief supplies. In January 2025, China handed over equipment for the China-Aid Anti-Drug Laboratory to PNG, which will enhance PNG's capacity to combat drug crimes.

China always believes that the domestic affairs of Pacific Island countries need no interference, their right to independent development never denied, and the environment of peace and stability in the region must be secured. China's exchanges and cooperation with Pacific island countries are aimed at supporting and helping each other and achieving common development, without any selfish geopolitical interests. The Pacific should not become an arena of big power rivalry, nor the "backyard" of any country. Pacific Island countries have all the right to pursue friendly cooperation with all development partners. China welcomes more genuine assistance by other partners to PNG and other Pacific Island countries to the real benefit for the people of the Pacific. We firmly oppose any zero-sum game or exclusive arrangements.

Q: What are the plans for the next 50 years?

YANG: In the future, the Chinese side will continue to develop its relations with PNG on the basis of the "four full respects" policy, which is to fully respect the Pacific Island countries' sovereignty and independence, will, cultural traditions and effort to seek strength through unity. Chinese assistance to PNG will firmly follow the principles of no political conditions attached, non-interference in internal affairs and no empty promises. China looks forward to working with PNG to further strengthen and upgrade the China-PNG comprehensive strategic partnership to the greater benefit of our two countries and peoples.

China has a huge market, advanced technology and complete manufacturing capacity, while PNG boasts rich resources and has an abundant labour force. The Three Global Initiatives that President Xi Jinping proposed are the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative

and the Global Civilization Initiative. They guide the progress of human society across these three dimensions, offering China's solutions to major challenges pertaining to peace and development for humanity. This has opened up new space and provided new opportunities for China-PNG cooperation. To implement the important consensus between our leaders, China would like to explore and expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation under the framework of the three global initiatives, enriching the China-PNG comprehensive strategic partnership and building a community with a shared future for mankind together. China stands ready to support PNG in making good use of platforms such as the Global Development Promotion Center Network and strengthen policy exchanges and practical cooperation under relevant bilateral MOUs. We will actively explore the China-PNG+ model of tripartite cooperation, and deepen cooperation in the areas including trade and investment, infrastructure, energy and minerals, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, downstream processing, information and communication technology, to improve PNG's economic development and wellbeing of its people. On security cooperation, China is prepared to deepen traditional and non-traditional security cooperation with PNG, and provide more support to PNG in tackling climate change, responding to natural disasters and improving public health. Our two sides could hold discussions for signing relevant documents for cooperation under the Global Security Initiative. We are also willing to strengthen defense relations and policing cooperation with PNG to support PNG's capacity building and improving law and order situation.

Facing mounting global crises and challenges, no country can stand unaffected. All countries must join hands to move forward. In the pursuit of peace and stability, material sufficiency, and cultural-ethical enrichment, China will be the most reliable partner of all countries, including PNG. We will work with PNG and all other friends to implement the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilisation Initiative, to build a community with a shared future for mankind and to bring benefit for the whole world.

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